# Communications Style Guide

Guidance for usage when producing written communications, brochures, websites or other public-facing content for the School of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Pennsylvania

# Contents

Included in this document are the rules for crafting text in communications or other pieces that are public facing (websites, blogs, e-newsletters, social media posts, brochures, etc.). Staff or other community members who work on these projects should familiarize themselves with this document. In addition, the School follows AP Style for rules on abbreviations, capitalization, comma and hyphen usage.

Jump to:

- [University Name](#)
- [School Name](#)
- [Department Names](#)
- [Attribution of Faculty](#)
- [Attribution of Students and Alumni](#)
- [Degree Names and Usage](#)
- [Degree Program Names and Usage](#)
- [Postdoctoral Fellows](#)
- [Penn Engineering Identity Kit](#)
- [A Note on Logos](#)

**University Name:**

The University should be referred to as the "University of Pennsylvania" or "Penn" or "the University." Never refer to Penn as "Upenn" or "UPenn" or "U of P."

**School Name:**

The School should be referred to as "Penn Engineering" or the "School of Engineering and Applied Science" or "the School."

Do not use:

- The abbreviation "SEAS"
- School of Engineering, College of Engineering or the abbreviations "SOE" or "COE"
- The plural "School of Engineering and Applied Sciences"
- The ampersand in "School of Engineering & Applied Science"

**Department Names:**

The proper names of the six engineering departments and their abbreviations are:

- Bioengineering (BE)
- Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering (CBE)
- Computer and Information Science (CIS)
- Electrical and Systems Engineering (ESE)
- Materials Science and Engineering (MSE)
- Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics (MEAM)

Do not use an ampersand (&) in the place of "and" in department names. When referring to the departments, names should be capitalized as in the following examples:

- As chair of the Department of Bioengineering…
- Laboratories in the Bioengineering department…
- The Department is engaged in…

Do not refer to departments as "Penn [Name or Abbreviation of Department]" because this naming convention is for divisions of the University, such as schools like Penn Engineering or Penn SAS. Academic departments are divisions of a school, not the University.

A Note on Discipline Names

In many cases the name of a department or a degree program is the same as an engineering discipline. When referring to a discipline, not a department or degree program name, the discipline is not capitalized. See:

- Laboratories that focus on bioengineering research are typically…
- Students who choose to study mechanical engineering concepts…

**Attribution of Faculty:**

Faculty members should never be mentioned without attribution. In text discussing faculty, refer to them initially with their full name and title. Do not include their Ph.D. or M.D. distinction(s). Note that scholarly chairs (named professorships), along with unnamed professorships (assistant, associate and full professor titles), are both capitalized:

- John Smith, Jane Doe Distinguished Professor in the Department of Bioengineering, conducts research in…
- John Smith, Assistant Professor in the Department of Bioengineering, conducts research in…

Once attributed, faculty members should be referred to by their last name:

- Smith, an accomplished member of…

Do not use:

- John, an accomplished member of…
- Dr. Smith, an accomplished member of…
- Professor Smith, an accomplished member of…
- Smith, M.D., an accomplished member of…
- Smith, Ph.D., an accomplished member of…

**Attribution of Students and Alumni:**

Our students should always have attribution that includes their year and engineering degree program.

- Lucy Smith, a rising sophomore in the Digital Media Design (DMD) program, chose the…
- Amy Smith, a second-year doctoral student in Electrical and Systems Engineering (ESE), chose the…
- Joe Smith (EE'13), chose the…

When referring parenthetically to a degree/class for a student or alum, use the abbreviation for the program, an apostrophe facing the abbreviation and the year, all without spaces:

- John Smith (DMD'15), chose the…

Not:

- John Smith (DMD'15), chose the…
- John Smith (DMD '15), chose the…

**Degree Names and Usage:**

<u>Undergraduate Degrees</u>

Penn Engineering offers two undergraduate degrees, the Bachelor of Science in Engineering (B.S.E.) and the Bachelor of Applied Science (B.A.S.). If you use a degree abbreviation, it should always include periods. Refer to these degrees as follows:

- Jane Doe is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Engineering (B.S.E.) in…
- Jane Doe plans to obtain a B.A.S. in…
- Jane Doe will graduate with a bachelor's degree in… [note that "bachelor's" always has an apostrophe and it is not to be capitalized unless it begins a sentence or you need to use it in title case]

<u>Graduate Degrees</u>

The two most common degrees offered at the graduate level are the Master of Science in Engineering (M.S.E.) and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. If you use a degree abbreviation, it should always include periods. Refer to these degrees in text as follows:

- John Smith will receive a Ph.D. in…
- John Smith will receive a doctorate in…
- John Smith will receive an M.S.E. in…
- John Smith will receive a master's in… [note that "master's" always has an apostrophe and it is not to be capitalized unless it begins a sentence or you need to use it in title case]

**Degree Program Names and Usage:**

Please be sure that when attributing a student (or alum) with a program that you use the correct program name. Program names are always capitalized:

- Jane Doe earned a bachelor's degree in Computer Science in….
- Jane Doe is a senior pursuing a B.A.S. in Biomedical Science.
- Jane Doe will graduate in 2024 with a Master of Science in Engineering in Nanotechnology.
- Jane Doe earned a Master of Computer and Information Technology in 2020.

The table below shows the degrees offered by the School. As you can see, programs can share the same name across the undergraduate and graduate levels, so it can sometimes be important to clarify programmatic affiliations when writing about a student or alum:

| Program Name | Undergraduate | | Graduate | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | B.S.E. | B.A.S. | M.S.E. | Master's (other) | Ph.D. |
| Bioengineering | x | | x | | x |
| Biomedical Science | | x | | | |
| Biotechnology | | | | x: Master of Biotechnology | |
| Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering | x | | x | | x |
| Computational Biology | | x | | | |
| Computer and Cognitive Science | | x | | | |
| Computer and Information Science | | | x | | x |
| Computer and Information Technology | | | | x: Master of Computer and Information Technology | |
| Computer Engineering | x | | | | |
| Computer Graphics and Game Technology | | | x | | |
| Computer Science | x | x | | | |
| Data Science | | | x | | |
| Digital Media Design | x | | | | |
| Electrical and Systems Engineering | | | | | x |
| Electrical Engineering | x | | x | | |
| Integrated Product Design | | | x | x: Master of Integrated Product Design | |
| Materials Science and Engineering | x | | x | | x |
| Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics | x | | x | | x |
| Nanotechnology | | | x | | |
| Networked and Social Systems Engineering | x | | | | |
| Robotics | | | x | | |
| Scientific Computing | | | x | | |
| Systems Engineering | | | x | | |
| Systems Science and Engineering | x | | | | |

**Postdoctoral Fellows:**

Postdoctoral fellows should be referred to as "postdoctoral fellows." In public-facing text, try not to use the informal:

- post doc (never capitalize as in "Post Doc")
- post-doc
- postdoc

Refer to them as follows:

- John Smith, a postdoctoral fellow in the laboratory of…
- Jane Doe completed a postdoctoral fellowship in…

**Penn Engineering Identity Kit:**

Penn Engineering provides an identity kit with additional guidelines and tools [here](). Included are:

- School boilerplate text
- Low-res logos for download
- Branded PowerPoint templates
- Image request guidelines

**A Note on Logos:**

No new logos should be created for programs, groups or laboratories. All entities in the School should use the Penn Engineering logo, which can be obtained [here]().

If the program is interdisciplinary in nature and includes members outside of Penn Engineering, you can use the Penn logo. Penn logos can be obtained [here]().

Do not change the colors, typefaces, graphics or words included in any University or School logo. Do not alter or distort the Penn Shield in any way. No text should be added to logos or next to logos to create the impression of a new logo.